

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 /021 W

-----095785 130238Z /66

R 120641Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO AMEMBASSY MANAMA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 6690

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 3588

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINR, PK

SUBJECT: NEW PAKISTAN AMBASSADOR TO BAHRAIN

1. THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN, ON APRIL 6, ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF HAKIM M. AHSON AS ITS NEW AMBASSADOR IN MANAMA. AHSON, BORN IN 1918, DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS A "POLITICAL APPOINTEE" RATHER THAN A CAREER DIPLOMAT, DESPITE HIS LONG SERVICE. HE CLAIMS TO BE POLITICALLY LINKED WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO, WHICH, IF TRUE, DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE HURT HIM AND MAKES HIS ASSIGNMENT AT THIS TIME SOMEWHAT CURIOUS.

2. AHSON COMES FROM A LONG LINE OF HAKIMS (PRACTITIONERS OF AN ISLAMIC SYSTEM OF MEDICINE) AND IS, HIMSELF, A TRAINED MEDICAL PRACTITIONER HAVING GRADUATED FROM THE BOMBAY MEDICAL COLLEGE. HE SERVED ON THE KARACHI MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE (ONCE THE CITY'S GOVERNING BODY) PRIOR TO PARTITION AND WAS AFTERWARDS ELECTED TO A ONE-YEAR TERM AS THAT CITY'S MAYOR. WHEN KARACHI BECAME THE CAPITAL OF PAKISTAN IN 1947, THE POST OF MAYOR WAS ABOLISHED AND AHSON BECAME THE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL AREA FOR THE REMAINDER OF HIS TERM.

3. IN 1948, AHSON EMBARKED ON THE DIPLOMATIC CAREER WHICH HAS OCCUPIED HIM EVER SINCE. AT THAT TIME, HE WAS APPOINTED AS A MEMBER OF PAKISTAN'S DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS, THE FIRST

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OF FOUR SUCH APPOINTMENTS. DURING THE 1953 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION, AHSON WAS ELECTED RAPPOORTEUR, AND IN 1963, HE SERVED AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE UNGA'S BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE. HE HAS ALSO SERVED AS AMBASSADOR TO NIGERIA, TO IRAQ, TO AFGHANISTAN, TO YUGOSLAVIA, TO QATAR, AND TO OMAN. IN 1966 HE LED PAKISTAN'S DELEGATION TO THE COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTER'S CONFERENCE ON RHODESIA.

4. AHSON IS KNOWN AS A COOPERATIVE, PLEASANT, SOCIABLE COLLEAGUE, INTELLIGENT AND WELL INFORMED. HE REPORTEDLY LIKES AMERICANS AND IS LIKED BY THEM. HE WILL REMINISCE WARMLY OF HIS TOUR OF THE UNITED STATES IN 1948. HIS PERFORMANCE AS ACTING CHAIRMAN OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE 18TH UNGA WAS DESCRIBED AS VERY ABLE, "HANDLING THE COMMITTEE MUCH BETTER THAN DID THE REGULAR CHAIRMAN EARLIER". WITH A PASSION FOR EXCHANGING "CONFIDENCES", AHSON TRIES TO GIVE ORDINARY CONVERSATIONS A CONSPIRATORIAL AIR.

5. AHSON HAS OCCASIONALLY LANDED IN HOT WATER WITH HOST GOVERNMENTS. WHILE AMBASSADOR TO AFGHANISTAN, AHSON WAS APPARENTLY A LITTLE TOO STANDOFFISH, AND THE AFGHANS LET THEIR DISPLEASURE WITH HIM BE KNOWN. DURING HIS TOUR OF DUTY IN DOHA, AHSON REPORTEDLY ENGAGED IN A RUNNING BATTLE WITH HIS SHAYKHLY LANDLORD AND ALSO ANGERED THE QATARIS BY ALLOWING HIS EMBASSY'S PREMISES TO BE USED FOR A LARGE ANTI-INDIAN RALLY. ON HIS PART AHSON WAS DISPLEASED WITH WHAT HE SAW OF THE QATARI PERCEPTION OF PAKISTAN AS NOTHING BUT A LARGE LABOR POOL.

6. AHSON IS MARRIED AND HAS TWO DAUGHTERS AND TWO SONS. HIS WIFE, AT LEAST ONE OF THE DAUGHTERS, AND BOTH SONS ARE PHYSICIANS LIKE HIM. HIS WIFE HAS NOT JOINED AHSON ON PREVIOUS ASSIGNMENTS, PREFERRING TO REMAIN IN KARACHI TO PURSUE HER MEDICAL CAREER. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT AHSON PREFERS ASSIGNMENTS IN THE GULF.
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HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE, BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ISLAMA03588
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780158-0255
Format: TEL
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780466/aaaacegt.tel
Line Count: 95
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d837d0b1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2996870
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW PAKISTAN AMBASSADOR TO BAHRAIN
TAGS: PINR, PDIP, PK, BH, (AHSON, HAKIM M)
To: MANAMA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d837d0b1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014